

STATEMENT OF JOHN P. OLSSON, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FOR PRESENTATION TO THE HOUSE MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES COMMITTEE, MARCH 7, 1972.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am John Olsson, the Deputy Under Secretary of the Department of Transportation. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you again this year on behalf of Secretary Volpe and the U. S. Coast Guard in support of H. R. 13188 the bill now before you which would authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for Fiscal Year 1973.

Gentlemen, since I appeared before this Committee in March 1971, the Coast Guard, under the able leadership of its Commandant, Admiral Chester Bender, has continued to provide invaluable service to this Nation. The Coast Guard has effectively performed its varied mission to assure that our waterborne commerce moves safely and efficiently. In addition to its historical responsibilities for search and rescue, providing aids to navigation, and enforcing safety regulations, the Coast Guard has been given greater responsibilities for marine environmental problems and recreational boating safety.

These expanded responsibilities have been recognized in our authorization request for FY 1973. Our appropriation request for Acquisition, Construction and Improvements totals \$135.7 million for 1973, or \$38 million more than the 1972 appropriation. To our knowledge this AC&I request is the largest amount requested for this appropriation. It recognizes the needs of the Coast Guard for modernizing and improving their shore facilities, as well as

including funds for a second large new icebreaker and two C-130 long range aircraft.

Under the new authority granted by the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971, the Coast Guard will administer the first full year of a coordinated national boating safety program during 1973 to improve recreational boating safety and assist the States in establishing expanded boating safety programs. Recreational boating is one of the fastest growing activities in this Nation, with a total of about seven million boats now operating on our lakes, inland waterways, and coastal waters. Our 1973 request for \$7.5 million for State Boating Safety Assistance is the full amount authorized and will provide the financial assistance to meet this growing need for improved safety at the State level.

Another recently enacted legislative measure - the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act of 1971 - requires most vessels to have the capability of communicating their intentions to one another through voice radio. This legislation is another measure which will aid the Coast Guard in its continuing efforts to improve the safety of marine traffic in our ports and waterways. In addition, activity will continue on the development of other marine traffic systems for use in congested ports and waterways. Such systems will assist in reducing the possibility of collisions involving ships containing hazardous materials and polluting substances. This activity would, of course, be expanded upon enactment of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act which the Congress currently has under consideration.

The general area of protecting the marine environment and preventing marine pollution is becoming an increasingly important mission for the Coast Guard. During the past year, for example, the Coast Guard received reports of 9,000 marine pollution incidents of varying sizes. The regional response centers and special pollution strike force teams have proved to be an important element in the protection of our marine environment. Both in its operations and in its research and development programs the Coast Guard will continue to give this mission a high priority within its overall responsibility.

Finally, I should also like to briefly mention the Coast Guard's fine performance in two other areas of activity; first, in protecting the rights of our Nation's fishing industry, and second, in search and rescue operations. As the world competition for resources from the sea becomes greater, the protection of our fishing industry will gain even more importance. Similarly, search and rescue operations are projected to increase by 5% annually. During the past year the Coast Guard answered 44,000 calls for search and rescue assistance, assisted a quarter of a million people, and saved 2,500 lives and an estimated \$4-1/2 billion in property. This is a record of which we can all be proud.

Mr. Chairman, I have gotten to know and respect the Coast Guard as a highly efficient and effective organization. I speak for Secretary Volpe and the entire Department when I say that we are proud of the outstanding record of service which the Coast Guard continues to provide to our Nation. I would

also commend this Committee for its unfailing support of the Coast Guard and its deep interest in assuring that the Coast Guard has the necessary resources to maintain its high level of performance.

We believe that the Coast Guard request for FY 1973 is reflective of the responsibilities - both old and new - which the Coast Guard must meet; and that it is responsive to the needs which these responsibilities create. We appreciate your past support of the Coast Guard and we urge your assistance in assuring that the Coast Guard is able to continue and enhance its outstanding record of service.

Now I have the privilege of introducing Admiral Chester R. Bender, Commandant of the U. S. Coast Guard, who will describe in more detail some of the most recent activities of the Coast Guard and the specific items which are included in the authorizing legislation.

Thank you.